

Linda Clair
Seven-day Meditation Retreat
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Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 7c – Friday afternoon discussion session

Question: What came up for me, the question, and it was serious although it doesn't feel it now – there was something you said I couldn't go along with and it bothered me. Then last time you said just ask straight what it is. I don't know if I understood when you said you have to go through this to wake up. A particular book came up for me, it was *Collision with the Infinite*. This woman woke up...

Linda: The one that got on a bus? She died of a brain tumour?

Question: Yes, so it doesn't ring true because of her. When I read it, it sounded right, so do I have to do this? I like to think I could bump into a lamp post tomorrow and wake up. (laughter)

Linda: Well, as long as you think and hope that, that will get in the way because you'll always be hoping. It will. I'm not sure about her, I read a bit about her. I didn't meet her so I really can't say. But I did read some of it. But most people who say stuff like that – Eckhart Tolle says things like that – he sat on a park bench, but he didn't go into the details of all the practice he did as well, from what I saw.

The same with a lot of people. They talk about this point of enlightenment and when it happened but they don't talk so much about the work that they did because it's not very appealing to people. It's much more appealing to think, "Maybe when I get on the next bus, I'll become enlightened. It will be easy and I won't have to go through this." But if you accept that you'll probably have to do this for however long, maybe it will happen when you're getting on a bus, I don't know.

But you do need to do the preparation. Well, you don't need to because occasionally people don't do so much, but then on realisation they can be quite unstable, in a way. There are certain parts that haven't been balanced and they do eventually come up, like someone like Andrew Cohen who did have something very strong about him but there was a lot of stuff that he hadn't looked at.

Question: With that women too, it was the same thing. It happened to her and it freaked her out. Her sense of personal identity, boom! So it seems it can happen.

Linda: Occasionally, I'd say. So maybe I change what I say and say "occasionally." But yes, it's actually quite dangerous when it happens like that. And you wouldn't really want to be in this state without that foundation. I've met people who have had some sort of deep realisation and they are still really quite unstable, because it does shock you to the core. So yes, 99.9% people do, from what I can see, do need to. There might be a few people in institutions who have realised but haven't prepared and it's just been too much for them.

Question: So I think that was good what you said about having to be stable because that could easily happen if someone suddenly got enlightened, which has happened to some people, and they think, "I'm going mad," because it would be so different from their ordinary life. And you were saying about people, if you're clever in ordinary life you'll be an advantage once you're enlightened.

Linda: No, I didn't. (laughter)

Question: Didn't she say that? (laughter) I thought I heard that...

Linda: If you're clever??? What did I say?

Interjection: (faint) If you understand the workings of the mind.

Question: That's it. (laughter) If your mind or brain is good you'll be more advantage once you're enlightened, to the world.

Linda: If you go through a practice like this, it shows you, sort of, step by step what is happening and how you arrived at this point, which is just now. So then you can give other people some pointers. It will make your enlightenment, realisation much fuller and much more profound because this is part of it now: watching the mind, watching how crazy it is, going through sitting again and again, then proving that this does work.

Question: So I'll understand it?

Linda: You'll understand it but not intellectually. You'll understand how you got here rather than, "Oh my god, what happened! What was that?" And you'll appreciate it and you'll respect it. You'll respect this practice and anyone who has gone through this and is realised you'll have the deepest, deepest respect for, because you'll know what it takes.

Question: I thought I'd ask something about resistance because I've had a kind of mixed retreat, some really encouraging and even pleasurable parts of it but that's been just shorter episodes, and then a lot of deeper resistance than I've ever had since I met you. Not wanting to leave but looking forward to being gone, "I've had it, I'm tired." So I'm trying to not push, and soften a bit and let the resistance be there but I don't know if I'm working with it as well as I could. I haven't got the energy to really be very clear and work hard, I know that instinctively. How did you work with resistance when it was strong?

Linda: Just kept going. During retreats I used to put a lot effort in the morning and then just tread water in the afternoon because I'd be too tired. So I'd sit in the afternoon but not really work as hard. just be there. So just go with what you really feel to do because if you push too much you can be giving the resistance a bit more energy. But if you come back too much, you can just let it overtake you where you become, "Oh, I don't care."

Question: I've been sitting, trying to softly be here.

Linda: Well, do that and see, particularly when you're tired near the end. It's always changing so there's no one rule.

Question: I think I'm really tired. I've looked and looked and looked for this new stillness that's visible to you but not to me.

Linda: Don't look for anything. Don't look for anything.

Question: I hear that but to finish my sentence – even though I'm tired there's something that's very awake as well. It's kind of... I can't say it.

Linda: Kind of what?

Question: You can't know the thing that's awake. I want to grasp something. You can't get hold of it. So you're just sitting in this mysterious weirdness that you don't know what it is. Then your mind goes bananas.

Linda: Well, keep coming back to basics. Just come back to your body. Are you counting at all?

Question: Yes, I am but I've given up a bit because I'm like some zombie going, "One! Two!" then have a dream and then, "One! Two!" I just feel ridiculous. I should say it in German. (laughter)

Question: I'm looking for some clarification. This morning you said don't try and look for anything and instead?

Linda: Watch. It's different. Yes, so just watch.

Question: It really resonated when you said it...

Question: Talking about breathing again and breathing forcefully or not breathing forcefully. I didn't quite get it because it was breathing with a lot of effort rather than the intention. I'm just going on from my experience because I had a few sits that were completely disastrous and I just went hell for leather with the breathing and it got more and more in a stew and I went, "What happens if I do the opposite?" I went very slowly and very lightly, intentionally. It struck me it was more the affirmation at the beginning of the sit – "This is it," – to state your case against the mind.

Linda: It's more the intention to just stay here, "Okay, I'm here." But try not to judge your sitting as disastrous or fantastic or whatever, because what you feel is disastrous is just your view of it. You might describe it to me and I might go, "Oh, great!" The fact that you're judging it as disastrous will undermine you and will affect your whole sitting, because you're saying, "Oh, my mind's busy, so this is disastrous," or whatever happened.

Question: I just had a very extreme circumstance this morning of getting completely in a negative space and being completely dominated by what was going on. And the next sit I gave up and it was totally different and I wondered, "How does that work?" I guess that's an example of what you're saying.

Linda: Yes, just don't judge it. You never know how it's going to be. And if you go, "Ah, this is a fantastic sit!" – the next sit, if it doesn't measure up or if you try and repeat it, you're going to, "Ah, this is terrible." That's why I talk about stability being really important. So if you cannot go too far

up and down – you will at times – but have that stability, that will help everything, with the highs and the lows – they won't be so high and so low.

But we're used to things being high and low. We sort of like that drama of, "Ah, this is terrible. Ah, this is wonderful!" But the straight line is, "Ah, that's boring," because there's no drama in it. But eventually the drama becomes so tedious, so boring, you can't be bothered with it. If you want some drama you watch something on TV. But experiment doing things. And sometimes doing the opposite to what you think is right is often the most effective thing to do.

Question: Yes, that struck me this morning when I kind of gave up.

Linda: Yes, just give up.

So rather than labelling it as disastrous or wonderful, just "extreme" or, "Ah, that was intense," or something like that because talking about it like that sort of weakens the whole thing a bit. So be careful how you describe it. And you start to see how much language does affect how you feel. You become aware of your judgments and the language you use and how you describe things. It is quite important.